



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 2303347
Applicant Name: Olivier Landa of Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects for Seattle Public Library
Address of Proposal: 9010 35th Avenue SW

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Master use permit for future construction of a two-story, 7,826 square foot addition to an existing public library for a total of 16,000 square feet. Project includes interior/exterior alterations and future demolition of a 1,174 square feet portion to existing structure. Surface parking to be provided for 23 vehicles. (The Seattle Public Library-Southwest Branch). *

The following approvals are required:

Special Exception- to allow a structure to exceed the maximum size in the NC2 zone. (SMC Chapter 23.47)

SEPA - Environmental Determination
(SMC Chapter 25.05)

SEPA DETERMINATION

☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☒ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

*Project originally noticed as Master Use Permit for future construction of a two-story, 7,826 square foot addition to an existing public library for a total of 16,000 square feet. Project includes interior/exterior alterations and future demolition of a 1,174 square feet portion to existing structure. Surface parking to be provided for 24 vehicles. (The Seattle Public Library-Southwest Branch).

BACKGROUND DATA

Property & Area Characteristics

The 21,605 square foot project site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 40 foot height limit (NC2-40) and is developed with the Southwest Branch of the Seattle Public Library. The site is at the southeast corner of SW 35th Street and SW Henderson Street.

Surrounding property to the north, across SW Henderson Street is zoned NC2-40 and developed with a gas station and convenience store. Property to the east across an alley is zoned Single Family 7200 and developed with single family residences. Property abutting the library site to the south is zoned NC2-40 and is developed with an apartment. Property to the west, across 35th Avenue SW, is zoned NC2-40 and developed with mixed use buildings.

Thirty-fifth (35th) Avenue SW is improved with street trees, sidewalk, curb, gutter and pavement and is a designated arterial street. SW Henderson Street is improved with street trees, sidewalk, curb, gutter and pavement and is not an arterial street. A partially improved alley abuts the site on the east property line. SPL is working with the City Forester at SDOT in an effort to retain the trident maple trees existing in the street right of way. It may not be practical to retain all the trees due to their health and/or close proximity to the new curb and sidewalk.

The site is fully developed with asphalt, landscaping and the library building. The topography is essentially flat with no remarkable features.

Proposal

The proposal consists of an addition of 7,826 square feet to an existing 8,213 square foot library resulting in a total of 16,039 square feet. A one story addition will wrap the existing building while a second story will also be added above. The 1st floor addition will be constructed onto the south and west portions of the existing building. The existing surface parking lot and the loading berth and curbcut are to remain. The area of the addition is currently used as an entry plaza for the library and is improved with landscaping and concrete. A multi-purpose room with a kitchenette, restrooms and staff offices will be located on the 2nd floor. An arcade structure along the 35th Avenue SW frontage will extend from the entrance of the library across to the parking lot and over the parking lot driveway. The new addition and the arcade will step up the scale of the building along 35th Avenue SW in order to create a civic presence. The expanded library will feature an expanded book collection, new furniture and book stacks, upgraded technology services and equipment, new mechanical systems, new landscaping and lighting, and a meeting room.

The existing surface parking lot will provide parking for 23 vehicles. The code required parking for the library is 42 spaces; however, Chart A, footnote 10 under SMC 23.54.015, provides the Director with discretion to modify the parking requirements for libraries when in commercial zones. A waiver of 19 parking spaces was granted after considering information provided by SPL. This is discussed in more detail under the SEPA analysis.

Public Comment

No comment letters were received during the public comment period which ended on November 5, 2003

Seattle Design Commission

This proposal is subject to review by the Seattle Design Commission (SDC) because it is a city facility. The Commission's role is to advise the project designer in an effort to foster well-designed projects that are worthy of civic projects. The SDC reviewed the project on January 16, 2003, June 19, 2003 and November 20, 2003. The SDC supported the overall development proposal and program. For complete

SDC actions and comments, the approved minutes from the meetings are available on the CityDesign website located at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/dpd/citydesign>.

ANALYSIS - SPECIAL EXCEPTION

The size of each institution in the NC-2 zone is limited to a maximum size of 15,000 sq. ft. A business establishment may be expanded up to a maximum of 25,000 sq. ft. by Special Exception, based upon an assessment of the following factors listed under SMC 23.47.010 G:

- A. *The impacts of the operating business establishment and the anticipated impacts if an increase in size were permitted;*

SPL is seeking an increase in size of 1,039 square feet to make a total business establishment size of 16,039 square feet. Granting an increase in size of 1,039 square feet will likely have no discernable impacts to the neighborhood. The library has existed at this location for many years and any impacts from the proposed addition are not expected to significantly increase. The new library will likely generate a slightly higher patronage since it will provide better library services than previously, but the difference in impacts between a new 15,000 square foot library as compared to a 16,039 square foot library are not expected to be discernable. Impacts from the new library are examined under the SEPA analysis in this document.

- B. *The availability of commercial space in the zone for uses which contribute to the function and desired characteristics of the zone, as described in Chapter 23.34;*

Property fronting on 35th Avenue SW between SW Henderson Street and SW Barton Street is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 40 foot height limit. Numerous properties in this corridor are underdeveloped so there would be substantial commercial capacity available if these sites were fully developed. Additionally, there are commercially zoned properties south of this commercial node located near SW Roxbury Street which could contribute to the function of the zone if re-developed. Lease space in a strip mall at the corner of SW Roxbury Street and 35th Avenue SW is available according to a sign posted in the window.

The proposed project does not substantially exceed the maximum size limits and will not perceptibly impact the availability of commercial space in the neighborhood

- C. *The number of business establishments present in the zone that are similar to the business establishment for which expansion is proposed;*

There are no other libraries in this immediate neighborhood.

- D. *The compatibility of the operating business establishment with the character and scale of the business district and the surrounding neighborhood; and*

The library is expected to be very compatible with the character and scale of the business district and surrounding neighborhood. The character of the use at the subject site is not changing or substantially intensifying.

The business district is under developed with small neighborhood retail establishments in mostly 1 or 2 story buildings. The commercial development is mostly oriented at the intersections. Development on the rest of the block primarily consists of 3 or 4 story, medium sized apartment building sometimes with

ground floor retail. Future commercial development is expected to maximize the zoning envelope which would increase the scale of buildings in the neighborhood. The proposed structure is not maximizing the building envelope so the scale of the structure will be more compatible with the existing scale of the neighborhood. The bulk of the addition is oriented along 35th Avenue SW and not close to the single family properties to the east.

E. The length of time the business establishment has been operating.

The library has been operating at this site for 43 years since 1961.

DECISION - SPECIAL EXCEPTION

For the preceding reasons, the Special Exception to allow an operating business to be expanded to 16,039 sq. ft. as proposed on the plans submitted under this Master Use Permit application is **APPROVED**.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated September 12, 2003 and annotated by the Department. The information in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 23.05.665) discusses the relationship between the City's code/policies and environmental review. The Overview Policy states, in part, "Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact; it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation". The Policies also discuss in SMC 23.05.665 D1-7, that in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to deny or mitigate a project based on adverse environmental impacts. This may be specified otherwise in the policies for specific elements of the environment found in SMC 25.05.675. In consideration of these policies, a more detailed discussion of some of the potential impacts is appropriate.

Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulate from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during grading, excavation, and general site work; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified construction related impacts. Specifically these are: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (grading, site excavation and soil erosion); Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, removal of debris, and obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way); Compliance with these applicable codes and

ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts, but impacts such as air quality and noise require further discussion and may require SEPA mitigation.

Noise

The project is expected to generate loud noise during demolition, grading and construction. These impacts would be especially adverse in the early morning, in the evening, and on weekends. The surrounding properties are developed with single family homes and apartments, and will be impacted by construction noise. Pursuant to SEPA authority, the applicant will be required to limit periods of construction to between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. during non-holiday weekdays. This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature or allow low noise interior work after the exterior of the structure is enclosed. This condition may also be modified to permit low noise exterior work (e.g., installation of landscaping) after approval from DPD.

Air Quality

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and will require permits for removal of asbestos (if any) during demolition. The owner and/or responsible party (ies) are required to comply with the PSCAA rules pertaining to demolition of projects with or without asbestos. This will ensure proper handling and disposal of asbestos, as well as demolition of structures without asbestos. No further SEPA conditioning is necessary.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area and increased demand for parking; increased demand for public services and utilities; and increased light and glare; increased energy demand; increased ambient noise associated with increased human activity and vehicular movement.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site detention of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; the Seattle Building Code which provides prescriptive construction techniques and standards; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long term long term impacts, although some impacts warrant further discussion and possible mitigation.

Traffic and Parking

SPL provided a transportation plan prepared by Transportation Solutions, Inc. dated September 10, 2003 that examines the parking and access impacts associated with the project. The report was supplemented on May 11, 2004 to provide turning movement analysis, specifically for southbound vehicles turning left into the proposed parking lot.

The intersection of SW Henderson Street and 35th Avenue SW was studied to determine whether vehicles traveling southbound on 35th Avenue SW and turning left into the parking lot would block the

intersection. It was estimated that the intersection would only be blocked during rare occurrences; therefore no mitigation is necessary. The addition is not expected to generate a significant number of vehicle trips in the peak hours. The additional vehicle trips are not expected to have an adverse impact on traffic conditions or reduce the level of service at nearby intersections. Therefore, no mitigation of traffic impacts under SEPA is warranted for this project.

The proposed project will provide parking for 23 vehicles, and the code required parking for the project is 42 parking spaces. The plan indicates that the peak parking demand for the proposed addition is expected to be 29 parking spaces (3.74 vehicles per 1,000 square feet). The demand is based on how the existing parking lot is utilized during peak periods. The peak parking demand is typically in the early evening for libraries which coincides with the peak parking demand for on-street parking (weekdays between 5:00 PM and 6:00 PM) in this area as determined by the utilization study discussed below. It was found that the existing 20 spaces in the parking lot were almost totally occupied during peak periods. Additionally, it was found that 6 close by street parking spaces were occupied by library patrons. Based on that data, a peak parking rate of 3.74 vehicles per 1000 square feet was derived. It should be noted that The City of Seattle's Strategic Planning Office performed a citywide parking study in 2000 which provided data showing a parking demand for libraries as being 2.08 vehicles per 1000 square feet. Parking demands do vary slightly throughout the city; however, the derived ratio of 3.74 vehicles per 1000 square feet is conservative as compared to the citywide library demand ratio. The Land Use Code requirement for off street parking quantity for the meeting room space is expected to be similar to actual demand. The total peak parking demand is estimated to be 66 parking spaces once the project is complete. This means there will likely be a spillover parking demand of 43 vehicles on the streets which cannot be absorbed in the parking lot.

An on-street parking utilization study was performed on various dates and times to determine whether the street could absorb the spillover parking demand. The study area included legal parking spaces within 400 feet of the site and found that there were 306 legal spaces. It found the highest average utilization rate of 25% occurred on a weekday between 5:00 PM and 6:00 PM. The City deems on-street parking at capacity when the rate is 85%, thus the utilization rates in this neighborhood are very low. The study applied the estimated spillover demand to the utilization rates and found that the on-street parking supply is expected to easily accommodate the additional vehicles. The utilization rate when the project is complete is estimated to be 39% which is still a very low rate of occupancy. The utilization rate is a percentage of estimated vehicles parked on the street (119) versus the on-street supply (306). In light of this information, no SEPA mitigation for parking impacts is necessary.

Other Impacts

The other impacts such as but not limited to, increased bulk and scale, increased ambient noise, and increased demand on public services and utilities are mitigated by codes and are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the

requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.

CONDITIONS –SEPA

During Construction

The following condition(s) to be enforced during construction shall be posted at the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. If more than one street abuts the site, conditions shall be posted at each street. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other waterproofing material and shall remain posted on-site for the duration of the construction.

1. The hours of construction activity shall be limited to non holiday weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature or allow low noise interior work after the exterior of the structure is enclosed. This condition may also be modified to permit low noise exterior work (e.g., installation of landscaping) after approval from DPD.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: May 24, 2004
Jess E. Harris, AICP, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development
Land Use Division